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ABSTRACT

Intended for personnel of local school districts in Oklahoma, the manual offers guidelines for locating, evaluating, and providing special services for handicapped children. Information is presented in question/answer format in six major sections: introduction; awareness campaign (newspaper articles, radio and television, flyers and brochures, public speaking); screening; referral; evaluation; and service delivery. Among the topics addressed are the following: benefits of early identification, Federal funding, implementation of an awareness campaign, steps for obtaining publicity from the local newspaper, appropriate radio and television stations for broadcasting child serve announcements, effective flyers, screening tests, referral records, the outcome of evaluation, and the parent role in service delivery. (SBH)

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OKLAHOMA CHILD SERVE MANUAL

Developed By

The Oklahoma Special Education Section
Oklahoma State Department of Education
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

and

The Midwest Regional Resource Center
Drake University
Des Moines, Iowa

1979

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OKLAHOMA CHILD SERVE

MANUAL

This manual is provided to local school districts in Oklahoma to assist in the effort to identify and serve children with special needs. The Oklahoma State Department of Special Education provides these guidelines only to facilitate the current efforts of local school districts in identifying, locating, evaluating, and providing special services for the handicapped child.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION
- What is Child Serve? 1
- What children should be served?. 1
- Who is responsibile? 2
- What are the benefits of early identification? 3
- What funds are available for Child Serve?. 3
- How does the Federal funding work? 3
- Can local school districts lose their Federal funding if they do not implement Child Serve activities? 4
- Can these funds continue to be used for Child Serve? 4

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN
- What is an awareness campaign? 5
- How do you inform the public about Child Serve?. 5
- What does the public want to know? 6
- Where do you begin planning an awareness campaign? 7
- What is the most important piece of material for an awareness campaign?. 9
- How do you implement an awareness campaign?. 10
- Should records be kept?. 10

Newspaper Articles
- How do you get articles about Child Serve in the newspaper?. . 11
- How to stay on the good side of your local newspaper (and get more publicity for Child Serve). 11

Radio and Television
- How do you get Child Serve announcements on radio or television?. 12
- What radio stations are most appropriate for broadcasting Child Serve announcements? 12
- What television stations are appropriate for broadcasting Child Serve announcements? 12
- What material must radio or television stations obtain to make Child Serve presentations?. 12
- What to remember when writing news releases for radio or television 13

Flyers and Brochures
What should be included in a flyer?. 14
What to remember when printing flyers. 14
Where are flyers most effective? 15

Public Speaking
Is public speaking helpful in an awareness campaign? 16
What kinds of questions might be asked?. 17

Appendix. 18

SCREENING
What is screening? 19
Who should be screened?. 20
Who administers screening tests? 20
Why screen?. 21
What do you do with screening results? 21

REFERRAL
What is a referral?. 22
[illegible] is a child referred?. 22
Who makes referrals? 23
Should records be kept?. 23

EVALUATION
What is evaluation?. 24
Who does the evaluation? 25
What is the outcome of evaluation? 25

SERVICE DELIVERY
What is service? 26
What is service delivery?. 26
What children are provided services? 26
What is the parental role in service delivery? 27
How frequently should placement be reviewed? 27
What are possible results of the annual program review?. . . . 27

WHAT IS CHILD SERVE?

CHILD SERVE is the active, ongoing process of locating, identifying and evaluating handicapped children and providing a free, appropriate, public education. These children may be classified as either unserved - currently not receiving any special services or underserved - currently receiving special services but not the special services they need.

WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD BE SERVED?

Public Law 94-142 states that "all children residing within the jurisdiction of the local educational agency who are handicapped, regardless of the severity of their handicap, and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated."

Under this statute, the age range of birth through 21 is greater for identifying, locating and evaluating handicapped children than the mandated age range for providing special services. One reason for the broader age requirement on "Child Find" activities is to enable states to be aware of and plan for younger children, who will require special education and related services.

Therefore, local school districts in Oklahoma must identify, locate, and evaluate all handicapped children, birth through age 21.

Provision of special services to the evaluated handicapped child residing in Oklahoma, birth through age 21, applies with the following limitations:

1. From birth through age 3, services are mandated for the blind, partically blind, deaf and hard-of hearing children and low incidence severely, multiply-handicapped children, i.e. deaf-blind retarded, cerebral palsied, autistic, and other children who fail to thrive from birth. (Section 13-101, 1970 Legislature)

2. Full services for all handicapped, ages 4 through 18.

3. Services for ages 19 through 21 are permissive except when a child has not had 12 years of education or completed high school.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

At the State Level?

The Oklahoma State Department of Special Education is responsible for coordinating the "Child Serve" activities. All handicapped children, birth through 21, residing in Oklahoma must be identified, located, and evaluated. The Oklahoma State Department of Special Education is also responsible for insuring that all eligible handicapped children are provided special services. This involves assisting local school districts in planning, coordinating, and implementing a comprehensive statewide program.

At the Local Level?

Local school districts are responsible for the actual identification, location and assessment of all handicapped children, birth through 21, in their jurisdiction. Local school districts are also responsible for providing special services to all eligible handicapped children. This jurisdiction includes resident children placed in public and private agencies and institutions outside the local school district.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF EARLY IDENTIFICATION?

In addition to providing local school districts with valuable information as to the types and degrees of handicapping conditions they need to plan for, early identification provides the school district the opportunity to assist in early intervention. The handicapped child can be provided a program and/or the families can be referred to other agencies providing early intervention programs (e.g. Head Start, Community Centers, etc.).

The sooner children with special education needs can be identified, the sooner they can learn to use their potential. Early identification of a condition means earlier treatment and possible remediation.

Psychological complications, in both the child and the family, can be minimized if effective means of remediating the handicapping condition are begun early. Early intervention programs, like preventive medicine, are generally very effective and much more reasonable to finance than are programs designed for older children.

WHAT FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CHILD SERVE?

Monies for Child Serve activities are available through Public Law 94-142, Part B. Child Serve activities include the ongoing process of locating, identifying and evaluating handicapped children, as well as the provision of special services for all eligible handicapped children. A priority for the use of these funds is to identify the unserved handicapped child (currently not receiving any special services). Local school districts applying for these funds must submit an annual proposal to the Oklahoma Department of Special Education and must have an approved local plan.

HOW DOES THE FEDERAL FUNDING WORK?

Public Law 94-142 is an open-ended piece of legislation with no cut-off date. It is the first federal law for handicapped children whose funds will be increasing on a yearly basis.

Starting in fiscal year 1978, states received federal funds based on the number of handicapped children being served in the state, multiplied by a percentage of the average per pupil expenditure. This federally authorized percentage increases yearly in the following proportions:

1978 = 5%	1981 = 30%
1979 = 10%	1982 = 40%
1980 = 20%	1983 = 40%

Once the state receives the appropriated federal funds, based on this formula, it then distributes a specified percentage to local educational agencies. In fiscal year 1978, the state-local distribution was 50 percent state and 50 percent local. Beginning with fiscal year 1979, and thereafter, the proportion will be 25 percent state and 75 percent local. Therefore, local educational agencies will be eligible for more continuous federal funding for handicapped children than ever before.

CAN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS LOSE THEIR FEDERAL FUNDING IF THEY DO NOT IMPLEMENT CHILD SERVE ACTIVITIES?

Yes. The location of unserved handicapped children is the first priority for the use of Title VI-B funds. Those districts who do not demonstrate the effort to implement active, ongoing Child Service campaigns risk losing these funds.

CAN THESE FUNDS CONTINUE TO BE USED FOR CHILD SERVE?

Yes. The location, identification, and evaluation of all handicapped children is a priority that must be addressed each year. However, once an active, ongoing Child Serve program is begun, it should become easier and less expensive. Funds will continue to be needed to locate those handicapped children who may have moved into the district, who were previously not located, who are high risk, or newly born.

WHAT IS AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN?

An awareness campaign involves the planning, organization, and distribution of information to the public for the purpose of creating an overall awareness of the Child Serve program. The campaign is expected to utilize all available local resources including volunteers and various communication channels (i.e. word of mouth, media, etc.).

Expected outcomes of an effective campaign include:

- Public cooperation in continued identification, location and evaluation of individuals who may require special education. More children will be located, and eventually served.
- Development and/or expansion of rapport and cooperation among local agencies.
- Provision of appropriate special services for handicapped children who were previously unserved or underserved.

HOW DO YOU INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT CHILD SERVE? (See Appendix for samples)

- Use the broadcast media. Advertisements and announcements on local radio and TV networks are one of the most effective means of communicating information.

- Use local publications. Local or regional newspapers are another effective means of informing the public. Utilize local company publications and community shoppers for placement of Child Serve notices

- Use word-of-mouth and door-to-door canvassing. Parents and other volunteers can distribute printed materials and discuss the program's importance with neighbors.

- Make presentations. Local clubs, including PTA, Jaycees, Lions Clubs, and the Moose or Elks Lodge are good possibilities for presentations to help raise public awareness and help to acquire public support and volunteers.

- Use pamphlets and posters. Pamphlets can be printed and handed out at public functions, placed in mail boxes or used as grocery bag stuffers. Include a brochure in local bank statements, whenever possible. Posters can be placed in local shopping centers, churches, clubs, etc.

WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC WANT TO KNOW?

Information released to the public should include details about the following?

What is Child Serve?

Why is it important?

Who might benefit?

When and where will screening be available?

How will screening results be used?

Where can the public get more information?

When developing an awareness campaign, simplicity is important. Pages with a few lines of concise information are more likely to be read than those that are covered with script.

A word to the wise: Develop a logo or slogan. Then, use your logo and/or slogan as often as possible. A logo will be remembered long after written information is forgotten. The intent is to crystallize an awareness of Child Serve in the minds of those in your community.

WHERE DO YOU BEGIN PLANNING AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN?

- Know your local Child Serve policy. Familiarize yourself with the law (federal and state). Know what you and your school district are responsible for doing.

- Know what has already been done in your community.

- Establish professional rapport whenever possible. In acquainting yourself with the services of other agencies, it is important to acquaint them with you and your project. One way of establishing professional rapport is to maintain a consistent policy about Child Serve and the role of the Department of Education, etc. in the overall community effort.

- Know the audience. Acquire a thorough knowledge of local attitudes and determine the existing level of awareness about handicapping conditions and special education. Identify the community's predominant demographic characteristics (i.e., occupations, ethnic backgrounds, religious affiliations, etc.). Knowing the characteristics of the audience will help in determining the most effective means of communication. The approach that you will take may vary from re-education of the public about educational handicaps to one of simply providing dates, times and locations of screening.

- Identify available media. Determine which media are available. Consider the following possibilities:

  - television stations
  - radio stations
  - community newspapers
  - shopping guides
  - club publications
  - local company publications
  - publications of other agencies addressing handicaps
  - welcome wagon kits
  - school publications (elementary, secondary, and college)

- Prepare a list of available media. The list should include the name, address, phone number, contact person, and prices for publication or broadcast time.

- Determine the most effective means of communication. The way in which your message is delivered is primarily determined by demographic characteristics. For example,

in a rural community, a spot on an early morning news and weather broadcast would probably reach more of the local community than a spot on a morning television show. In an urban area, the opposite may be true. It is helpful to compile a list of major organizations within the community. This list can be used when enlisting volunteers and for the dissemination of material (i.e., announcements in organizational publication). Following is a list of suggested organizations.

- agencies for the handicapped
- hospitals
- social service organizations
- ethnic organizations
- major employers
- local stores
- schools
- parent groups
- military bases, etc.

- Enlist support from the professional and business community. Contact the public relations or marketing department of local businesses, banks, etc. Discuss the project and attempt to develop ideas for mutual advertising. You may be able to include their name or logo on your posters if they include the Child Serve logo or a slogan in their local newspaper ads. Remember, it is good for their public image to be in support of this worthwhile, important program.

- Enlist volunteers. Contact local clubs, parent groups, student organizations, etc. Request their assistance as volunteer workers. They may want to know what a volunteer would do. Some ways of using volunteers include:

  - Assisting in the distribution of material; delivery of posters, handing out brochures, envelop stuffing.

  - Speaking at local club meetings.

  - Counseling parents of handicapped children.

  - Making telephone and door-to-door contacts. Volunteers may be helpful in setting up screening appointments and answering the public's questions.

- Establish a reasonable timeline and stick to it! "Timing" is a key word in any campaign. A screening session should closely follow its announcement. No more than five days should lapse between the announcement of an activity and its execution. Timing is also important for volunteers' schedules and utilization of media. Publicity about the Child Serve program can begin several weeks in advance of its onset. However, when announcing screening dates, don't allow too much time to lapse between the announcement and the event -- the public will forget.

- Keep clear, accurate records of volunteer's schedules, dates and times of media usage, contact people at helping agencies, and keep an accurate count of the number of children screened (where, when and for what they were screened.)

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF MATERIAL FOR AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN?

A fact sheet. All forms of media request a fact sheet for reference when publicizing information about an activity. This fact sheet should contain details about the Child Serve project and activities.

It may be necessary to print a general fact sheet, as well as periodic, more detailed fact sheets. Varied forms of the fact sheet may be needed for various occasions.

Questions to be answered by a general fact sheet are:

What? Define Child Serve.

When? Ongoing

Where? Community name

Why? Rationale for screening, early intervention, etc. (may be tied in with "What?")

Who? Children 0-21 years

How? Plans of public awareness, interagency cooperation. Contact person's name, business address, telephone number, etc.

Points to be addressed on a detailed fact sheet include:

Event (Screening)

Date(s)

Time(s)

Location (Be specific, provide directions where necessary)

Participants (Specific ages to be screened, etc.)

Contact person's name, business address, telephone number

HOW DO YOU IMPLEMENT AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN?

The implementation of the campaign is merely an extension of planning. School districts may want to select a coordinator. The coordinator's primary responsibility during implementation is that of coordinating the ongoing activities of volunteers and confirming the accuracy and timeliness of distributing material and media coverage.

SHOULD RECORDS BE KEPT?

Absolutely. Keeping detailed, accurate records of campaign activities not only helps to maintain a clear picture of what is currently going on, but also can be helpful in planning future approaches to more effective awareness. An awareness campaign will probably not be perfect at its onset. Some ways of disseminating information will be better than others. Records are a good way of documenting the knowledge you acquire about campaign effectiveness.

Detailed records also help to reduce confusion and error when more than one person is closely involved in the awareness campaign. Documentation in the form of complete records is helpful in the maintenance of consistency throughout the campaign.

Records should include:

dates

times

contact person(s)

agreements (detailed)

comments as to the effectiveness of an activity

problems in planning and execution

copies of all correspondence

copies of photos, articles, flyers, scripts, etc.

HOW DO YOU GET ARTICLES ABOUT CHILD SERVE IN THE NEWSPAPER?

- Contact the Education Editor or education writer for your local newspaper. If you are in a metropolitan area, you may want to contact several papers, including suburban areas.

- Tell them the general purpose of the article or news release you want printed and ask them what specific information you should include. It is always necessary to provide the name and number of one person to be reached for more information regarding Child Serve.

- Send a clean, typewritten, double-spaced copy of the article or news release to the education writer. Send it well in advance of the date it will appear (two weeks is suggested), but not so far ahead that it gets buried under a stack of papers! If you have sent it early, it is advisable to give the paper a call to confirm that they received the material.

- Many of your news releases will deal with the screening program.

  It is useful to include:

  Who? What? Why? When?

  Where? (Be as specific as possible; give the address, and directions if necessary.)

  And: For additional information, please contact:

HOW TO STAY ON THE GOOD SIDE OF YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER (AND GET MORE PUBLICITY FOR CHILD SERVE)

- Newspapers have deadlines to meet. If you are given a deadline, follow it. There's a good chance you won't get your article printed if it's late. Most papers usually have a deadline of one week prior to press. Generally, they need to know two weeks in advance if you are requesting a photographer.

Parts of this section were adapted from Child Find: A Handbook for Implementing Procedures and Recommended Guidelines by Carol Chazdon and Donna Malpiede Harvey. Colorado Department of Education, Denver, CO. 1978. And Child Find Manual, New York Regional Resource Center, Center for Advanced Study in Education, University of New York, NY. 1977.

HOW DO YOU GET CHILD SERVE ANNOUNCEMENTS ON RADIO OR TELEVISION?

The public service department of most stations can give details about their procedures for aired announcements. Smaller stations may combine the public service and news departments.

WHAT RADIO STATIONS ARE MOST APPROPRIATE FOR BROADCASTING CHILD SERVE ANNOUNCEMENTS?

To answer this question, one must know who should hear the announcement. Generally speaking, radio stations cater to audiences within specific age ranges. Stations differing in type(s) of music and length of news broadcasts appeal to different audiences. A quick call to a station's general office can clarify details about their listening audience. It is usually appropriate to broadcast Child Serve information on as many stations as possible, especially those that are most popular. Bilingual and translated announcements may be extremely helpful in areas with large numbers of minority families.

WHAT TELEVISION STATIONS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR BROADCASTING CHILD SERVE ANNOUNCEMENTS?

All stations are appropriate.

WHAT MATERIAL MUST RADIO OR TELEVISION STATIONS OBTAIN TO MAKE CHILD SERVE PRESENTATIONS?

It is best to supply the station with a cover letter introducing yourself, your project, and requesting their assistance through public service announcements. Include an up-to-date fact sheet and suggested script. The main purpose of the script is to demonstrate the tone or mood of your message. It is important for your purposes to have a contact person at the station. He/she can be invaluable for reviewing broadcast and telecast requirements for the station. Ideally, your contact person should be the manager of the public service or news department.

WHAT TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING NEWS RELEASES FOR RADIO OR TELEVISION

- Keep the sentences simple and to the point. Avoid being choppy by including some longer sentences in the announcement.
- Avoid the use of pronouns. People who tune in to the broadcast late will not know to whom "he" or "she" refers.
- When using quotes, identify the speaker before the quote, i.e., "Mayor Jones announced..."
- Avoid the use of adjectives and adverbs. Examples of over-used superlatives include:

  very really extremely barely

- Avoid using figures. If they are important to the story, round them off. For example, avoid stating: "Three hundred and twenty thousand nine hundred and fifty-four..." Instead, present the information in the following manner, "Well over three-hundred thousand..."
- Cliches and stereotypes are overused. Try to describe situations simply and clearly without cutting corners.
- If you have a slogan for your campaign, use it whenever possible. One catchy appropriate phrase can convey more meaning than a paragraph and will probably be remembered much longer.

Samples are included in the Appendix.

Parts of this section were adapted from Child Find: A Handbook for Implementing Procedures and Recommended Guidelines by Carol Chazdon and Donna Malpiede Harvey. Colorado Department of Education, Denver, CO. 1978. And Child Find Manual, New York Regional Resource Center, Center for Advanced Study in Education, University of New York, NY. 1977.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A FLYER?

Event

Date

Time

Location

Contact person's name, phone number and address

Logo and slogan (if one is being used)

WHAT TO REMEMBER WHEN PRINTING FLYERS

- Keep it simple. Avoid filling the page with paragraphs of details.
- Keep it clear. Make sure the information presented will be easily understood by the public. The best way to determine whether or not the content of the flyer is understandable or clear is to show it to several people who are not involved in the campaign. If they have no questions about the content, chances are good that the rest of the public will respond similarly.
- Make it colorful. Local printers generally have a limited selection of paper colors. Brighter colors catch the eye more quickly than do cooler, pastel shades. Variations in the color of ink can add to a viewer's interest, however, use of colors other than black can become quite expensive.
- Print enough. Determine when and how flyers will be distributed. If volunteers stuff flyers into neighborhood mailboxes or grocery bags at the local food store, more will be needed than if flyers are placed at the reception table of a local meeting. Estimate the number of individuals who are to receive the message by flyer.

WHERE ARE FLYERS MOST EFFECTIVE?

Flyers are an effective, inexpensive way to deliver your message to the public. Common ways of utilizing flyers include:

- Grocery bag stuffers at local food stores. Ask the store manager to have sackers and checkers include the flyer in one bag per customer. Flyers may also be placed in the windows of food stores and other local businesses.

- Statement stuffers. Banks send monthly account statements to each customer. Contact the Public Relations or Special Events Department of each local bank. If you know a bank executive, you may request his/her assistance in contacting the correct person(s) to obtain permission to distribute your flyer in bank statements.

- Door-to-door handouts. Volunteers can be used to stuff community mailboxes with the Child Serve flyer door-to-door.

- Car windshields. Flyers can be placed between the windshield wiper and windshield or inside the handle of car doors. Take advantage of large gatherings to distribute flyers in this way.

- Distribute flyers to parents by sending them home with students. Another way to utilize students is to send home form letters explaining and announcing screening activities to parents.

IS PUBLIC SPEAKING HELPFUL IN AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN?

Yes. You will find numerous opportunities to present information on an innovative Child Serve project to local organizations. The most important thing to remember about public speaking for Child Serve is to provide accurate information. Generally, the more well informed the speaker, the more effectively he/she can present the information. Therefore, if volunteers and local personalities are used, be sure they have ample and accurate information.

Helpful tips for public speaking include:

- Keep it brief. Generally a presentation of 15-20 minutes in length is adequate. Question and answer periods should follow most presentations.
- Be prepared. Know your subject and your audience. Anticipate questions (i.e., special education teachers will probably not be interested in the same details as the local Jaycees). Make sure that what you say is consistent with the policy of your local school district.
- Start the speech with a strong statement, make several important points, expand, and develop each point, and end the presentation with a strong statement.
- Don't mumble or speak in monotone.
- Be sure you can be heard in the back of the audience.
- Use visual aids whenever possible (i.e. posters, easels, slide presentations, films, etc.) NOTE: Test your equipment before your presentation. Faulty equipment can distract the audience.
- Avoid reading your presentation. Use much eye contact with your audience.
- Practice the speech before you present it.
- Remember, you're the expert. Present your speech with confidence.

WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS MIGHT BE ASKED?

- Why is Child Serve necessary?
- Isn't it the parents' responsibility to see that their handicapped children are in school rather than the school's?
- Is every child found through Child Serve going to be provided a special education?
- Can my three-year old get service before he/she gets into school?
- How long will this program last?
- What about the handicapped children in school who are receiving an inadequate education?
- What assurances do we have that schools will provide the appropriate education?
- How much funding is available, and where does it come from?

Samples of awareness campaign materials are included in this section to provide Oklahoma School Districts with immediate resources to facilitate local activities for Child Serve. In ccoperation with local efforts, the Special Education Section of the Oklahoma Department of Education and Midwest Regional Resource Center encourages utilization of these resources.

WHAT IS SCREENING?

Screening is the process of distinguishing those children who are suspected of having handicapping conditions from other preschool and school-aged children. It is a systematic educational assessment procedure which samples abilities, skills, behavior, developmental growth, and other pupil characteristics. The primary purpose of screening is to identify those individuals who might have a high probability of need for special programs and services. Regional Education Service Centers' staffs will assist local school districts in Oklahoma in planning and implementing screening programs, as well as coordinating screening efforts with other agencies. Oklahoma screening programs will include the following:

- School districts will screen students in kindergarten, grades one and two, according to the 1974 Oklahoma Senate Bill 581.
- Early periodic screening programs are being initiated by Health and Welfare Departments under Title XIX Social Security Act, Medicaid.
- Well Baby Clinics are being conducted by District Health Departments through Maternal and Child Health Services.
- Screening for vision and hearing problems will be continued by Child Health Services.
- Regional Education Service consultants will promote dissemination of developmental information through newspapers and other media to assist parents in screening for possible handicaps and developmental lags.

Since screening should be viewed as a system for locating children who might need special services, it should not be viewed as a once-or-twice-a-year event. Rather, Oklahoma school districts should view screening as an ongoing process for helping locate previously unidentified handicapped children.

School districts should make regular attempts to obtain screening information from parents and teachers. Realistic criteria for referring children for diagnostic evaluations as a result of screening need to be set for each screening instrument used within any given district. Too often, these criteria are not realistic and either too many, or too few, children are referred, as a result of screening, for comprehensive evaluations.

WHO SHOULD BE SCREENED?

Local school districts in Oklahoma are responsible for identifying all children, birth through 21, who may be handicapped. It is recommended that local school districts work cooperatively with other community agencies and personnel to provide a comprehensive screening program.

WHO ADMINISTERS SCREENING TESTS?

Developmental screening tests may be administered by early childhood specialists, special educators, public health nurses, Regional Education Service Center personnel, or other personnel trained in administering the specific test that has been selected. In many cases, para-professionals and volunteers can be trained to administer developmental screening tests.

One consideration in test selection is the level of expertise necessary to administer the measure. A review of test requirements can assist in the selection of the test and screening personnel. Qualifications of screening personnel are usually addressed in the test manual. Where possible, utilize existing personnel who are qualified in areas like vision, hearing, and speech.

WHY SCREEN?

The sooner a child with special educational needs can be identified, the sooner he/she can be helped in learning to use his/her potential. Screening is used to identify children with potential problems and does not describe a specific need. It only indicates the need for a closer look. Screening does not involve IQ testing or achievement testing. Because developmental processes can vary from one child to another, those children who appear to be lagging in development should be rescreened before a complete evaluation is administered. Screening can save time and money by identifying children who need an educational evaluation, based on a preliminary look.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH SCREENING RESULTS?

After screening, it is necessary to follow-up on all children's test results. If a child "passed" the screening test, parents can be informed of the results through a letter or phone call.

If a child is identified as "high risk" by the screening test results, an appointment should be made with the parents to discuss the screening information. It should be stressed to the parents that screening does not yield specific information about a child. The "high risk" result may indicate the need for a complete evaluation, or the result may only indicate the need for screening to be readministered. If the child did not pass the screening test, it is important to meet with the parents to discuss the results. The parents should be informed that an evaluation is recommended to get more specific information about a child's strengths and weaknesses. Parental permission must be acquired before an evaluation can be conducted.

Portions of this section were taken from Child Find Manual, New York Regional Resource Center, Center for Advanced Study in Education, University of New York, NY. 1977.

WHAT IS A REFERRAL?

Referral is the process by which children with potential special education needs are designated as needing an evaluation. Each local school district in Oklahoma has the responsibility for establishing a referral procedure.

Oklahoma's Annual Program Plan offers State Education Agency (SEA) assistance to local school districts in systematizing the referral process:

> Referrals. SEA special education staff will assist school districts in systematizing their referral process. Regional Education Service consultants will make frequent contacts with other organizations and agencies involved in screening so that children identified as handicapped can be referred to appropriate school or other service agencies. The SEA coordinators and the Regional Education Service consultants will collaborate to expedite program-need awareness and program attainment and/or program development, when possible.

WHEN IS A CHILD REFERRED?

Within the Child Serve process, referral can occur at several places:

- Referral for screening; when parents or other concerned persons want to determine if a problem exists.
- Referral for evaluation; following screening or when a parent or the school believes a problem exists but need specific information about the child.

WHO MAKES REFERRALS?

Referrals for screening can be made by any concerned person or agency. For children who were not previously screened, a concerned person's referral may be the first time that child has been identified. In most cases, these children will first be screened in all areas of development, and then referred for evaluation if additional testing is warranted.

The following is a partial list of persons or agencies who may make referrals:

- Parents
- Neighbors
- Medical personnel
- Local Department of Social Services and Rehabilitative Institutions
- Local Department of Health
- Local Department of Mental Health
- Head Start
- Preschool Teachers
- Special Education teachers
- Day care workers
- Psychologists
- Social workers
- Principals
- Special Education directors
- Speech and language therapists
- Any other person or agency with concerns about a child

SHOULD RECORDS BE KEPT?

A system of record-keeping is extremely important at this stage if a young child has been "located, identified, and evaluated," then placed outside the public schools. In order for the Child Serve program to fulfill the goal of allowing schools to plan for the preschool handicapped, information about their special educational needs should be transmitted to the schools a year before they are ready to enter kindergarten. This gives the schools a year to plan the necessary budget and staff.

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

As defined by the Federal Register (December 30, 1976), "evaluation means procedures used to determine whether a child is handicapped and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not include basic tests administered to, or procedures used with, all children in a school, grade or class."

An evaluation serves two purposes:

1. It determines eligibility.
   ..Is the child handicapped, as defined in Oklahoma Bulletin 11?
   ..Is the child in need of special education because of this handicapping condition?

2. It provides specific information about the child's strengths and weaknesses to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

In compliance with Federal and Oklahoma law, comprehensive diagnosis and evaluation procedures must be operational within all school districts and contracting agencies providing special education programs and services. SEA special education staff will assist local school districts in the implementation of comprehensive evaluation procedures according to state rules and regulations which include a multidisciplinary team approach in the evaluation of handicapped children, as well as parental permission for testing or placement.

WHO DOES THE EVALUATION?

An appropriately qualified, multidisciplinary team shall be responsible for conducting evaluation procedures. This team may include special education and general education teachers, a school nurse, a social worker, a psychologist, a psychometrist, a speech therapist, a physician, the parents and/or others having knowledge about the child.

Individuals qualified to administer tests in Oklahoma must have on file with their LEA a certificate of competency issued by the professor who taught the course or the college official authorized to make such recommendation stating the specific tests they are qualified to administer and interpret the results for educational placement recommendations. It is important to emphasize here than an evaluation should not be limited to formal testing. A comprehensive evaluation should include informal teacher-made tests, observational data and analysis of anecdotal records (i.e. cumulative files, medical records).

The multidisciplinary team collects assessment data. After reviewing current information regarding the child, the multidisciplinary team determines the following:

1. What additional information is needed about the child?
2. What is the most effective means for acquiring the specific information?
3. Who is responsible for acquiring the specific information?

WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF EVALUATION?

Results of the evaluation provide the basis for planning Individualized Education Programs that continuously respond to the child's changing needs. This planning is again the responsibility of the multidisciplinary team made up of the parents of the child and the educators who are best informed of the child's needs.

Parts of this section were taken from the Federal Register, Washington, DC, December, 1976 and Child Find: A Handbook For Implementing Procedures and Recommended Guidelines by Carol Chazdon and Donna Malpiede Harvey. Colorado Department of Education, Denver, CO. 1978.

WHAT IS SERVICE?

Service refers to instructional and support activities provided for a handicapped child that have been determined specifically to meet that child's unique educational needs. Special education services are provided in order to insure that a handicapped child benefits from his educational experience.

WHAT IS SERVICE DELIVERY?

Service delivery refers to placement of a handicapped child and/or provision of support services, as designated by the child's Individualized Education Program. Service can be delivered by the local school district, agencies or institutions.

WHAT CHILDREN ARE PROVIDED SERVICES?

Although the law states that all handicapped children, birth through 21, must be identified, located, and evaluated, the responsibility to provide special services has the following restrictions:

1. Delivery of service is required by Oklahoma law for all handicapped children, ages 4 through 18.

2. From birth through age 3, services are mandated for the blind, partially blind, deaf and hard-of-hearing children, and low incidence severely, multiply-handicapped children, i.e. deaf-blind retarded, cerebral palsied, autistic, and other children who fail to thrive from birth (13-101, 1970 Legislature).

3. Delivery of service is permissive for handicapped children, ages 19 through 21, except when a child has not had twelve years of education or completed high school.

WHAT IS THE PARENTAL ROLE IN SERVICE DELIVERY?

Written permission for placement of a handicapped child must be obtained from the parents before services can be delivered.

HOW FREQUENTLY SHOULD PLACEMENT BE REVIEWED?

A program review must be conducted at least annually following placement, according to the law. If new information suggests a change is necessary, a review should be conducted more frequently. The Annual Program Review is conducted by the Placement committee or multidisciplinary team.

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE RESULTS OF THE ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW?

Following the Annual Program Review, the team may recommend:

- Continuation of placement
- Alternative placement
- Re-evaluation
- Termination of special services